

Initially, Claims 1-40 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §112, first paragraph, as allegedly containing subject matter not adequately described in the specification.

In response to this rejection, it is respectfully submitted that support for Applicants' claimed virtual room display means can be found, for example, in Figure 7 and the accompanying specification beginning on page 21, line 3. Accordingly, reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection under 35 U.S.C. §112, first paragraph, is respectfully requested.

Claims 1-5, 8-13, 16, 21-25 and 28-33 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103 as allegedly being obvious over Ludwig '294. In addition, Claims 6, 7, 18-20, 26, 27 and 38-40 are rejected as allegedly being obvious over Ludwig in view of Brunson '823, and Claims 14, 15, 17, 34, 35 and 37 were rejected as allegedly being obvious over Ludwig and further in view of Palmer '683. These rejections are respectfully traversed.

Applicants' invention as set forth in Claim 1 relates to a distributed office system provided with terminal devices installed for a plurality of users and a server device connected to the terminal devices via a communication channel for displaying information on a screen of a terminal device of each of the users. The system includes work situation display means for collectively displaying an information aggregate including at least two types of information for each user, and virtual room display means for displaying, for each user, diagram images indicating the user's virtual single-room office on the screen of the terminal device of the user. The displayed information includes the user's working situation image and character information concerning the user's working situation on the screen of the terminal device of the user.

Claim 21 relates to a method of managing a distributed office system provided with terminal devices installed for a plurality of users, and a server device connected to the

terminal devices via a communication channel for displaying information on a screen of the terminal device of the user in the distributed office system. The method includes the steps of displaying diagram images for each user indicating a user's virtual single-room office on the screen of the terminal device of the user, and collectively displaying an information aggregate of at least two types of information. The displayed information includes a user's working situation image and character information concerning the user's working situation.

In accordance with Applicants' claimed invention, a distributed office system displays pertinent information about each user as well as a virtual single-room office for each user.

As discussed in the previous Amendment of February 27, 2002, Ludwig relates to a multimedia collaboration system that displays an information aggregate of another user's working station. The computer based system in Ludwig uses geographically dispersed multimedia LANs that are interconnected by a WAN. As shown in Figures 2A and 2B, information is provided regarding another user's workstation and users in different windows are displayed.

With respect to Applicants' claimed invention, however, Ludwig is not understood to teach or suggest, inter alia, displaying character information concerning a user's working situation on the screen of the user and displaying a user's virtual single-room office on the screen of the user. While Ludwig may provide information on each user, Ludwig is not understood to provide character information concerning the user's working situation as shown,

for example, in numeral 82 of Figure 7. Moreover, Ludwig does not teach or suggest virtual room display means for displaying for each user diagram images indicating the user's virtual single-room office on the screen. The displays in Ludwig are not understood to teach or suggest the virtual room display means as recited in Claims 1 and 21.

Accordingly, reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection of Claims 1-5, 8-13, 16, 21-25 and 28-33 under 35 U.S.C. §103 is respectfully requested.

The secondary citation to Brunson relates to a video messaging arrangement and was cited for its teaching of a universal mailbox.

The secondary citation to Palmer relates to video teleconferencing and was cited for its teaching of frame rate control.

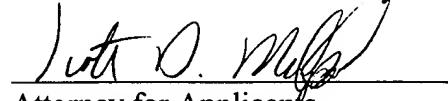
These secondary citations fail, however, to compensate for the deficiencies in Ludwig as discussed above with respect to Applicants' independent claims.

Accordingly, without conceding the propriety of modifying Ludwig in view of Brunson or Palmer, it is submitted that such combinations still fail to teach or suggest Applicants' claimed invention. Therefore, reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejections of Claims 6, 7, 14, 15-20, 26, 27, 34, 35 and 37-40 under 35 U.S.C. §103 are respectfully requested.

Accordingly, it is submitted that Applicants' invention as set forth in independent Claims 1 and 21 is patentable over the cited art. In addition, dependent Claims 3-20 and 23-40 set forth additional features of Applicants' invention. Independent consideration of the dependent claims is respectfully requested.

Applicants' undersigned attorney may be reached in our Washington, D.C. office by telephone at (202) 530-1010. All correspondence should continue to be directed to our below-listed address.

Respectfully submitted,



John D. Mills

Attorney for Applicants

Registration No. 32,533

FITZPATRICK, CELLA, HARPER & SCINTO
30 Rockefeller Plaza
New York, New York 10112-3801
Facsimile: (212) 218-2200

SDM\mnm

DC_MAIN 93938 v 1